

NEWS RELEASE

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

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DATE: January 25, 2019

CONTACT: Stacy Rowe

SUBJECT: Incidental take notice for Buffalo County

MADISON – Preconstruction activities for the Dairyland N-5 Transmission Line Rebuild Project may result in the "incidental taking" of a rare snake under a permit the Department of Natural Resources proposes to issue for the project. Incidental take refers to the unintentional loss of individual endangered or threatened animals or plants that does not put the overall population of the species at risk.

Dairyland Power Cooperative (Dairyland) is planning for the construction of the Alma to Rock Elm (N-5) 69 kilovolt (kV) Transmission Line Project. The N-5 69 kV transmission line was built in 1948 and is in poor condition and nearing the end of its useful life. The estimated typical lifespan of a wood pole transmission line is 55 to 65 years, and the N-5 is nearly 70 years old. The work for which Dairyland is seeking permitting at this time is the preconstruction clearing of vegetation within the existing 80-foot right-of-way within eastern massasauga habitat. The vegetation clearing activities are planned to occur during frozen ground conditions in early 2019. Dairyland intends to apply for any permits required for construction at a later date.

The presence of the state endangered (and federally threatened) eastern massasauga rattlesnake (*Sistrurus catenatus*) has been confirmed in the vicinity of the project site. DNR staff determined that the proposed project may result in the incidental taking of some snakes.

The Department has concluded that the proposed project is not likely to appreciably reduce the likelihood of the survival or recovery of the species within the state, the whole plant-animal community of which it is a part or the habitat that is critical to its existence.

The conservation measures to minimize the adverse effect on the endangered species will be incorporated into the proposed Incidental Take Permit. Copies of the jeopardy assessment and background information on the eastern massasauga are available by searching the DNR website for [incidental take public notice](#) or upon request from Stacy Rowe (608-266-7012 or stacy.rowe@wi.gov). The department is requesting comments from the public through February 8, 2019. Public comments should be sent to Stacy Rowe, WDNR, PO Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707-7921 or stacy.rowe@wi.gov.